

President's Report to the Senate – December 7, 2011

This last month was particularly focused on the relationships between the University and the Community. The major highlights were the Reports to the Community in both Thunder Bay and Orillia, the special Convocation to honour Phil Fontaine, and the “State of the Union” presentation to the Thunder Bay City Council.

The Honorary Doctorate was provided to Phil Fontaine at a special ceremony that included representatives from the RBC Joint Aboriginal Outreach program. As I watched the children drumming and looked out at this young audience I was very proud of the role that our staff is playing in making Lakehead University a place of welcome for aboriginal students.

Lakehead is increasingly taking its' place at the centre of its communities, as was made clear at the two Reports to the Community. We are a part of each community's cultural life, a major current economic contributor and a source of future hopes, both for new opportunities for our graduates and for the members of these communities. The Community is also becoming more aware of our role. The warm welcome I received at City Council is testimony to their high regard for Lakehead University.

SUSTAINABILITY

Expanding Future Enrolment

Yesterday's Fall Preview Day was the largest yet, with over 500 students. The annual event took place across campus on Tuesday, December 6, 2011. Prospective students filled halls and classrooms and labs as they interacted with Lakehead University faculty and staff, spread out all over campus, and gained an intimate understanding of Lakehead programs and student service offerings. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as cheerleader as the day wrapped up in the Outpost. My congratulations to all involved.

Increasing External Revenue

Fundraising is well on track for this year with nearly \$2 Million confirmed from major gifts alone. This includes a gift of \$1 Million from Simcoe County to help with the Orillia Campus. In addition to these monetary gifts we were pleased to announce the Chief Roy Michano series with over 600+ pieces of Aboriginal art donated by local businessman and art collector George Ward and his wife Kelly Ward. George and Kelly

have been adding to their collection for decades and have purchased or received works by over a dozen artists, many of whom are children or relatives of famed Woodland artist Norval Morrisseau. I am very proud to display this series at the PACI building, the home of our new Faculty of Law.

Alumni Association

The Alumni Association and I have agreed on a new MOU to establish our relationship with them over the next few years. The upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration will likely be our most important focus during this time.

President's Request for Initiatives

I was very pleased to see the range of innovative and exciting opportunities that were developed for this new program. Overall, there were 26 applications with a total of \$1.8 million requested. We have a major task of prioritizing ahead of us but hope to make the first announcements in the next two weeks.

Government Relations

On November 14 and 15 I spent two days in Ottawa describing Lakehead's Aboriginal and International agenda to a variety of Federal officials. On November 28 I was in Queen's Park where I attended Question Period followed by a meeting with the Honorable Michael Gravelle, Minister of Natural Resources.

Recruiting

The search firm Janet Wright has been hired to orchestrate the recruitment of the VP External Relations and the Dean for the Faculty of Law.

RESEARCH

Major Research Grants/Contracts Awarded (Sept – Oct 2011)

- Dr. Sudip Rakshit, NSERC Tier I Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Biorefining and Bioenergy has been approved by the CRC Secretariat in Ottawa. Dr, Rakshit will commence his appointment as a CRC at Lakehead University's Biorefining Research Institute (BRI) and Faculty of Engineering in March 2012,
- CFI awarded Dr. Sudip Rakshit, NSERC Tier 1 CRC at Lakehead an infrastructure grant of \$219,195.
- Kristin Burnett, Department of History awarded a SSHRC Aid to Scholarly Journals grant valued at \$70,843.

- Simon Lees, Faculty of Medicine, West Campus, awarded funding through a National Institutes of Health Grant worth \$53,000 (Sub-award to from Colorado State University).
- The Office of Research Services hosted several knowledge mobilization workshops for the social sciences, humanities and health facilitated by David Yetman. David is a knowledge mobilization expert that has done groundbreaking work for Memorial University of Newfoundland and for the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research in Toronto. David's workshops were well attended by Lakehead faculty members and community partners, especially from the local and regional school boards. It is hoped that these workshops will help strengthen collaborative research with community partners as well as strengthen external applications to SSHRC and CIHR.
- A SSHRC internal peer-review pilot program is initiated with the purpose of increasing our success rates nationally in SSHRC's new Insight and Partnership programs. Ten researchers have registered in the program to date.

DIVERSITY

Aboriginal

Relationships with Aboriginal leadership continue to build. Following up on the visioning session with NAN last June, I was invited to speak to the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Special Chiefs Assembly on November 23 where I gave them a formal presentation on my Aboriginal Strategy.

Access

One of my favourite projects came to fruition last month as Wasaya Airways and Lakehead University signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the Wasaya Airways Thunder Bay hangar and announced Reach Up! - Northern Community Sports and Leadership Program. Reach Up! is a collaborative initiative between Lakehead University Athletics and Wasaya Airways to provide on-site instruction in sport-specific coaching and general leadership strategies for youth in Northern Ontario First Nations communities serviced by Wasaya Airways.

Community Engagement

We are in the final stages of developing a new tuition credit program through co-operative relationships with NW Ontario school boards. The Lakehead District School Board is eager to expand last summer's pilot project. The Keewatin Patricia School Board is already meeting with us and we have received expressions of interest from several other Boards. We are also currently considering the development of a new fund, the Achievement Fund, to help support this program.